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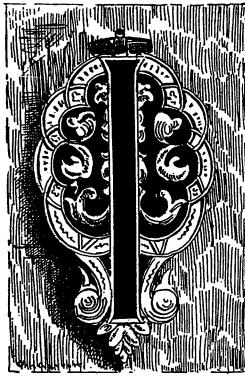
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



FANCIES OF THE HOUR.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.

IN this season of gifts the minor novelties submitted to the public, those at least that combine artistic elegance with purposes of household or personal utility, merit passing attention. The merest trifles indicating ingenuity of design or happy adaptations of materials are to be regarded as expositors of certain tendencies of public taste as apprehended or described by the purveyors who have to meet an untiring demand for novelties.

We gladly observe a general absence of the wildly fantastic and outré in design. Fancy, which if unrestrained, is simply lawless, has, on the whole, worked within legitimate bounds. The growing love of color has been freely ministered to; there is a less timid use of pure tones, and great skill is shown in harmonizing and subduing these.

ARTISTIC ingenuity is amply displayed in articles for the boudoir. In ceramic ware are picturesque figures finely modeled, holding with outstretched hands receptive pearly shells; "tollers of the sea," outspreading bronze nets bespangled with silver fish; simulated sets of books that open longitudinally in centre, revealing scent bottles luxuriously esconced in quilted silk; elaborate miniature railway freight cars with numerous inner compartments and secret drawers; leather cases of raised work, set off by enameled colors. One of the finest of toilet drawers in fancy wood has a slab of onyx, the space between which and shelf above has a series of compartments fronted with gilt brass bars at right angles, the interspaces filled with beveled glass, the wings ovaline in form, the bright surface contrasting charmingly with the onyx, with its wavy shades and semi-translucent depths.

ART metal lamps are shown that are composed entirely of bright copper and brass work, spun or turned, not cast, their principal effectiveness being due to the classic design and bright metal work. Glass shades are of a tint to match. Colored enamels are felicitously worked with brilliant pigments in Byzantine and other designs on the lids and sides of metallic boudoir coffers, some edged by rounded pillars in twisted and other forms, these adorned with metallic climbing plants, or covered with diaper etchings; the edged decoration, in many instances, borrowed from Greek art, and foliage and flowers in relief. The monotony of absolute formal disposition of ornament in a number of these is absent, or not apparent. Then there are Mexican onyx temples for storing jeweled treasures, pillars and pilasters relieved with acanthus capitals in gilt brass.

FAIRY lamps with shades of glass and transparent porcelain in shades of cameo, corallo, pale rose, blue satin, rose and citron, in diaper, wavy, segmental loops and other forms are the centre of circular flower vases, or are encircled below by flower holders in the form of knotted stems. The lamps are also grouped in tiers on chandeliers and candelabras, and with borders of flowers, ferns and mosses are mounted on wall brackets.

THE electric light is gracefully presented at the end of a wand held by the willowy figure of a danseuse in faience mounted on a bracket, the ordinary lamp being enveloped by a star in cut glass.

In table and fancy glass, of cut crystal and demi-crystal, etched and engraved, the translucent material is put to fullest account, displaying the resources of an art which so disposes the faces as to throw off to best advantage the colored refracted rays of light.

MANY of the small bevelled mirrors, instead of being wholly encased, rise bare out of a gilt brass floriated support which clambers up midway on one side. Frames of mirrors abound with exquisite conceits, in some of which even regular outlines are abandoned, and the glass field itself is encroached on. Other mirrors are in slender metallic frames, surmounted by pent roofs, with battlemented turrets in gilt, brass, and oxidized silver, hung in the air on either side.

CONTINENTAL manufacturers have made large contributions of ceramic ware of surpassing elegance of form and wonderful treatment of color surfaces.

FOR dinner table services we have flower sprigs intermixed with wild grasses, in low, soft and delicate tints, strewn informally and sparingly on a white ground; déjeuner and dessert services are to be met with, lavishly enriched with fanciful designs

enclosed in segmental or clustered geometric forms. Vases in Crown Derby, of Minton and Doulton ware, Dresden, Meissen and Viennese styles display exceeding beauty in form and color rendering, ranking among the most prominent *objets d'art*. A secondary treat consists in ceramic candelabras, figures, flower holders and brackets.

SOME splendid Japanese goods are shown, as in Kaga, Mandarin and Kiota tea sets, in rose jars, some of which are remarkable for delicacy of coloring, and lacquered articles are not wanting that represent as many as forty-eight separate coatings or layers of varnish, each of almost inconceivable thinness.

THE admirable execution of the recently imported Parian statuary is worthy of note; it is suited for wall niches and mounting on pedestals in corners of rooms. The tiles of enameled encaustic, printed and painted, adapted for cabinets, flower stands, dados and friezes, are most recherche and effective. Large panels, displaying pictorial scenes, designed for walls of halls, corridors, vestibules and stair landings are composed of a number of tiles, and are calculated to form enlivening though somewhat costly features of house decoration. Of fancy goods in majolica, there are many new and novel designs.

CONNOISSEURS will be delighted with vases, the designs on which, partly in bas relief molding and partly etched, are composed of variously colored clays. Even in the gloom of an expiring day, when all other objects are scarce visible, these fused clays shine out with a singular lustre, and at all times present a subdued recherche appearance.

THE daintiest illuminations in symbolic forms, and also in lettering, shine out in color and gold on the left upper edge of note paper, whilst the backs of envelopes are a field for the display of fanciful devices, such as silvered spider's web, or there is a cornerwise garniture in colors to imitate the finish seen on some choice medieval book covers, or incomplete broken design of sprigs and flowers that lose themselves over the borders. On the overlapping flap of some of these is a printed watch disc, to which the writer merely adds in ink the hour and minute hands to indicate the time at which the note was finished.

EMBROIDERY triumphs in the form of sprays of delicately worked flowers and grasses on the silk and satin and plush surfaces of gift articles, including the autograph albums with the dainty flexible covers lined with quilted satin, and fastened with silken cords.

LOOSE embroidered cloths of richly tinted textures are more utilized than ever in being thrown on or about various objects; rich Indian spangled cloths underlie and are wrapped around the base of ceramic and marble busts placed on pedestals. Waste paper holders include coarse rush woven hats of rustic type, garlanded with fruits, leaves and mounted on triangular bamboo supports. Celluloid, semi-transparent, takes many fanciful forms in toilet articles, watch case stands, etc.

PAINTING and embroidery are combined on silk panels, framed flatly in black, designed for filling up wall spaces. The embroidery, which is confined to large birds, such as pelicans, ostriches, etc., is boldly projected so as to display natural rounded contours. Although this is Viennese, not Japanese work, feathered effects are realistically given. In landscape scenes, we have, for instance, storks wading in sedgy streams, a level plateau as the middle ground, and ranges of mountains painted in the distant, misty background.

MANTEL forms are exhibited wholly draped in velvet plush, with lambrequin of rich folds of same material, combined with yellow tinted satin, drooping low over the plain background, hiding the fireplace, and finished off with silken tassels, mounted in gilt fire brass. The mantel supports a light carved cabinet. This drapery is intended to be utilized where grates in the body of the room supply hot air.

WE are even treated to enamel introduced into raised work, carved or otherwise, in rich hardwood mantels. Terra cotta is more than ever developing its resources, the utmost delicacy of outline having been achieved in minor articles as well as in door heads and panels. The ceramic artist has supplied for the season choice rustic designs for fern stands and flower pots.

DAINTY receptacles for articles of ladies' knitting and embroidery work are provided in elegant cradles in shell form of fine linen, with puffed borders set off by ribbon ties, the whole resting on bamboo supports. The old time bag in delicate hued satin, plain and embroidered, appears as a fixed attachment to ladies' work boxes and trinket receptacles; it is also used, with ribbon bows, for enwrapping scent bottles. The upper inclosing portion of the bag is used to close the mouths of numerous fancy baskets, also towel frames and satin shoes and slippers. Scented bags in leaf forms are grouped round and united to a central enameled button.

WE have necessarily only glanced at a few of the novelties of the hour. To many of these novelties the decorations of the season lend an additional charm, for a well selected gift is complementary to the taste and judgment of the giver.